

# Media Release



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## SAMARITANS HELPS HUNTER HOARDERS

This February, Samaritans will launch a 14-week program to help people of the Hunter to combat the clutter.

Since 2013, hoarding has been formally recognised as a medical disorder which has sometimes disastrous impacts on the hoarders emotional, social and financial wellbeing, and that of their family.

Samaritans in partnership with local psychologist, Michael Bazaley, will be facilitating a Hoarding Treatment Program for people in the community.

“The program will help tenants to learn to think about possessions in a different way and challenge people to gradually manage the clutter in their lives,” Rachelle Wills, Samaritans Coordinator, said.

“It’s about providing a safe and support environment for people to workshop the issue with people who understand what it’s like and to develop some great skills to take control of their hoarding tendencies,” Ms Wills said.

Hoarding is the persistent and unnecessary possession of articles, coupled with the difficulty to discard said items when they are no longer useful or needed. It is thought to impact the lives of up to 6% of the population.

“We know that people face difficulties with hoarding but sometimes it is unclear as to how widespread the problem it. It is known however, that hoarding creates significant safety risks with an ANU study suggesting that 25% of death from fires in homes occur in the homes of people with a hoarding problem,” Ms Wills said.

The program will follow techniques from ‘Buried in Treasures’, which is a self-help book written by Doctors, Tolin, Frost and Steketee, who are among the world leading experts in the study and treatment of hoarding disorders.

Interested participants are encouraged to contact Samaritans on 1300 656 336 to sign up.

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**Media are invited to contact** Laura Dawson from Samaritans Communications team on 4960 7100 or 0438 475 772 to organise an interview or photo opportunity.